

U.S. Serial No. 10/705,411
Response to Restriction Requirement and Preliminary Amendment
January 30, 2006

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AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph that begins on page 6, line 10 and continues to page 7, line 9, with the following amended paragraphs.

In accordance with the present invention, the lid element may comprise an orientation guide means.

In accordance with another aspect the present invention relates to a conveyance system (or assembly) for (the automatic) conveying a particulate substance from a removable particulate storage component to a predetermined or station (e.g. a mixing station (e.g. into a mixing receptacle for mixing an aqueous substance (e.g. water) with the particulate substance)),

wherein said removable particulate storage component comprises a valved wall element and is configured to define (i.e. form) an enclosed space (e.g. chamber) for containing a particulate substance (e.g. a particulate milk substance such as for example powdered milk),

said valved wall element comprising a valve member defining an outflow aperture for providing a flow path for the flow of particulate material out of said enclosed space (e.g. chamber), said valve member further comprising a plug element and a bias element, said plug and bias elements being configured such that said plug is displaceable between a closed position and an open position whereby when said plug is in said closed position said plug closes off said outflow aperture whereby particulate substance (e.g. powder) is unable to flow out of said enclosed space (e.g. chamber) through said outflow aperture and when said plug is in said open position particulate substance (e.g. powder) is able to flow out of said enclosed space (e.g. chamber) through said outflow aperture,

said conveyance system comprising

a particulate delivery component,

wherein said particulate delivery component comprises a conveyor element for conveying particulate substance from the replaceable particulate storage component to

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said predetermined station, and wherein said particulate delivery component further comprises an interconnect element for releasably interconnecting the conveyor element and the outflow aperture of said valve member for the flow of particulate substance through the outflow aperture to the conveyor element.

Please replace the paragraph that begins at page 7, line 7, with the following paragraph:

In accordance with the present invention a conveyance system may comprise a particulate delivery component which comprises a valve plug interaction element for releasably maintaining (i.e. for urging) the plug element of said valve member in said open position (i.e. against said bias element).

Please replace the paragraph that begins at page 7, line 11 with the following paragraph:

In accordance with the present invention a conveyance system may further comprise a support component,
wherein said support component is configured for releasably engaging said removeable storage component such that the storage component is oriented so that the valved wall member at least partially forms the bottom of the so engaged storage component (i.e. for the free flow (i.e. gravity induced flow) of particulate substance from the enclosed space).

Please insert the following paragraphs at page 12, line 20 as follows:

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a detachable valved lid element for covering an opening of a case element
the lid element being configured to co-operate with said case element such that the lid element is removably attachable to the case element so as to cover the opening and form an enclosed space for containing a particulate substance,

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the lid element comprising a valve member having an outflow aperture and defining a flow path for the flow of particulate material out of the enclosed space, the valve member further comprising a plug element and a bias component, the plug element and the bias component being configured such that the plug element is displaceable between a closed position and an open position whereby when the plug element is in the closed position the plug closes off the outflow aperture whereby particulate material is unable to flow out of the enclosed space through the outflow aperture and when the plug element is in the open position particulate material is able to flow out of the enclosed space through the outflow aperture, the bias element biasing the plug element in the closed position.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a lid element as defined above, wherein said orientation guide means comprises an orientation guide projection.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided beverage machine for dispensing a beverage, the beverage machine comprising a mixing station communicating with a dispensing station, a particulate delivery component for delivery of particulate substance from a removable particulate storage component to the mixing station, and an aqueous medium delivery means for delivering aqueous medium to the mixing station, wherein said removable particulate storage component comprises a valved wall element and is configured to define an enclosed space for containing a particulate substance,

the valved wall element comprising a valve member defining an outflow aperture for providing a flow path for the flow of particulate material out of the enclosed space, the valve member further comprising a plug element and a bias element, the plug and bias elements being configured such that the plug is displaceable between a closed position and an open position whereby when the plug is in the closed position the plug closes off the outflow aperture whereby particulate substance is unable to flow out of the enclosed space through the outflow

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aperture and when the plug is in the open position particulate substance is able to flow out of the enclosed space through the outflow aperture, characterized in that the beverage machine comprises a conveyance system, wherein the conveyance system comprises the particulate delivery component, wherein the particulate delivery component comprises a conveyor element for conveying particulate substance from the replaceable particulate storage component to the mixing station, and wherein the particulate delivery component further comprises an interconnect element for releasably interconnecting the conveyor element and the outflow aperture of the valve member for the flow of particulate substance through the outflow aperture to the conveyor element.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a beverage machine as defined above wherein the particulate delivery component comprises a valve plug interaction element for releasably maintaining maintaining the plug element of the valve member in said open position.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a beverage machine as defined above, wherein the conveyance system further comprises a support component, and wherein the support component is configured for releasably engaging the removeable storage component such that the storage component is oriented so that the valved wall member at least partially forms the bottom of the so engaged storage component.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a conveyance system as defined above wherein the conveyance system comprises the removeable particulate storage component

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a beverage machine as defined above wherein the particulate substance is a particulate milk substance